

FLORIDA'S EDEN PLAN

Water Awareness Campaign

THE POSITION

Water is vital to the economic and ecological health of the entire state of Florida and to the well-being of the citizens who live in its 67 counties. North Florida holds a key position in the state with a relatively intact hydrogeological system. The 30-county region protects the Floridan Aquifer, the largest magnitude of fresh water springs in the world, and the interconnected riverine, wetland and coastal water systems.

The economic and ecological value of this vast water system cannot be overestimated. However, the legislative, administrative and consumer safeguards to protect this resource are not adequate. Why is the water system of North Florida in danger of being misused, degraded, and destroyed? The answer is deceptively simple. We lack the necessary water protection because we, the people, have yet to command it. We currently lack the awareness and civic muscle necessary to demand best water use practices and command successful legislation.

Across the southeast, demographic pressures, exacerbated by drought, have pushed water issues to the front pages of newspapers and the forefront of public concern. Metro areas in Central Florida and Atlanta, looking for quick access to additional water for growing populations, are eyeing North Florida's water resources from the Apalachicola River in the west to the St. Johns River in the east. North Florida counties with small populations, comparatively little political power, and a perceived abundance of water are struggling to conserve the hydrogeological systems within their boundaries. Scientific knowledge of North Florida's water systems has increased dramatically over the last twenty years and sufficient data are available to establish the protections they deserve. Globally, too, new water-conservation techniques are leading some countries down more sustainable paths. But too often, water policy has come down to political power and parochialism rather than good science and best practices.

The importance of these hydrogeological systems for the future of Florida's ecology and economy makes it imperative that North Florida act as one region to work toward a sustainable water policy. The Florida's Eden Water Awareness Campaign provides a multi-faceted plan for increasing public awareness and developing the civic muscle needed to create sustainable water policies, pass them at every level of government, and put them into action.

The Water Awareness Campaign works in six action areas:

1. Public Outreach and Education
2. Regional Cooperation and Organizational Networking
3. Environmental Standards
4. Economic Development
5. Educational Curricula for Schools
6. Legislative Action

Florida's Eden is a nonprofit citizen initiative partnering to unite 30 counties of North Florida, creating one identifiable region for the purpose of protecting our natural resources and building a sustainable and prosperous economy. Florida's Eden is carried out under the auspices of the Artists Alliance of North Florida, a nonprofit 501c3 organization. **For more information please visit our website at www.FloridasEden.org**

ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL VALUE

The economic value of North Florida's water is enormous, providing direct and indirect support for agriculture, aquaculture, ecosystems, industry, fisheries, wildlife, birding, tourism, recreation, transportation, and drinking water and well-field protection. The hydrogeological system includes the Floridan Aquifer, springs, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, salt marshes, sea grasses, intracoastal and coastal waterways. This vast system provides obvious benefits within specific economic sectors, but even greater environmental values. The healthy aquifer maintains all North Florida's ecosystems, as well as its karst topography, preventing sinkholes and larger surface limestone collapse, as well as preventing large-scale saltwater intrusion that could harm agricultural and drinking water supply. Healthy springs and riverine outflow nourish the wetlands, salt marshes and sea grass communities, providing aquifer recharge, mitigating hurricane damage, and preventing coastal erosion and flooding.

Were this resource to be degraded, the economic and environmental costs of restoration are in excess of any current funding system. As experience with the Everglades has shown, even the most expensive restoration in history will not be able to bring back the original flow of the River of Grass. Preservation now, rather than restoration later, is the only viable choice.

The perceived abundance of water is an illusion. The health of the system depends on the free flow of clean water. Diversions, excessive alterations or contamination of North Florida's water systems will degrade not only the region's environment but, ultimately, its economy.

It is imperative that the citizens of North Florida become aware of the benefits that the intact water systems of their region provide for Florida as a whole and act to protect this resource on all levels. This is also a first step in halting an extractive economic cycle that has helped contribute to poverty for most of North Florida's counties. In its place, the Florida's Eden Plan provides a framework for establishing North Florida as a cohesive, sustainable and prosperous region, based in large part upon developing new ways of sustainable water usage, implementing this knowledge, and providing solutions to global water problems.

WATER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN GOALS

The ultimate goal is to establish Florida's Eden as a national model within five years and as an international center for regional sustainability within 10 years, with specific goals within each of six action areas:

1. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

GOALS

- a. Establish a cohesive region
- b. Build regional pride and citizen investment in its preservation
- c. Raise public awareness of the economic and quality of life benefits of environmental stewardship
- e. Celebrate the region through existing festivals, and create new events to showcase and spotlight successes and innovative ideas, solutions and efforts.

VEHICLES

- A. One Region/One Book Campaign
- B. Speaker's Bureau
- C. Product and Services Expos
- D. *Welcome to the Neighborhood* publications
- E. Local and Regional Celebrations and Events

2. REGIONAL COOPERATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKING

GOALS

- a. Engage communities to take local action and realize their role in the regional effort
- b. Establish county and regional benchmarks for water usage, contamination, conservation and re-use
- c. Encourage counties to cooperate in implementing best practices and regional benchmarks

VEHICLES

- a. Inventory of current water-related practices in each county
- b. Work with water scientists, area universities, Water Management Districts, and State Department of Environmental Protection to establish benchmarks for water use and conservation

3. ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

GOALS

- a. Provide an inventory of best practices and information for consumers and businesses
- b. Reduce per capita water usage
- c. Establish certification standards for “springs friendly” and other environmentally sustainable products and services

VEHICLES

- a. Online database of consumer and business best practices
- b. Publicize the 51 water-saving methods recommended by the Florida Water Conservation Initiative in 2002 and highlight new conservation measures.
- c. Work with IFAS, Water Management Districts, and state Department of Environmental Protection to establish certification standards and procedures for “springs friendly” products and services
- d. Water Awareness Guides distributed through Realtors and utility companies
- e. PSA’s, billboards, and other public relations outreach to the general public

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOALS

- a. Introduce the concept that great wealth can be created through the development, implementation and commercialization of sustainable water usage strategies
- b. Commit to become a leading center for sustainable clean and green economic models
- c. Recognize that our region’s natural resources must be protected as a core economic asset
- d. Promote economic and business opportunities that directly benefit from sustainable use of our natural resources and environment

VEHICLES

- A. Product and Services Expos
- B. Regional Scenic Trail Guides (e.g., Heart of Florida Scenic Trail, Pure Water Wilderness Scenic Trail, etc.)
- C. Green business initiatives by chambers of commerce, industry groups, TDCs, economic development agencies, etc.
- D. Academic Green Advising at community college and university level

5. EDUCATIONAL CURRICULA FOR SCHOOLS

GOALS

- a. Integrate environmental stewardship, civic participation, and environmental sciences into school curricula
- b. Partner with schools and organizations to give students an advocacy voice for the region
- c. Create a repository of “Sustainable Schools” projects that PTA’s and civic groups can carry out
- d. Speaker’s bureau for children and young adults

VEHICLES

- A. ARTT Program and ARTT-produced Teaching Website
- B. Sustainable Schools projects repository, for example, community service programs, “Edible Schoolyard”
- C. Speaker’s Bureau

6. LEGISLATIVE ACTION

- a. Build the citizen muscle to mandate aquifer, springs and water protection
- b. Regional water caucus to bring together elected officials
- b. Introduce and pass legislation that truly protects North Florida’s water resources

FLORIDA'S EDEN

The Region Challenges The Florida's Eden Plan

THE REGION: The area identified as Florida's Eden is a thirty county region of north Florida spanning the area from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. The Florida/Georgia state line defines the northern boundary, extending west to the Apalachicola River. The southern counties of Florida's Eden include Citrus, Marion, Lake and Volusia. Florida's Eden is a natural bioregion and comprises one growing zone. The environmental and water issues facing the area make it imperative that North Florida recognize itself and act as one region. The free flow of clean water is vital to the economic and environmental health of Florida's Eden. The region's still intact ecological system also serves as an essential recharge system necessary to the vitality of Florida's aquifer, springs, rivers, wetlands and coastal regions.

The Florida's Eden region shares a unique ecology and history, as well as shared challenges.

Unique Ecology

- North Florida rests atop the central section of the Floridan Aquifer which along with the northern sections in South Carolina, Alabama and Georgia feeds the artesian aquifer that underlies most of the Florida peninsula.
- The Floridan Aquifer is the largest, oldest, and deepest aquifer in the southeastern U.S., ranging over 100,000 square miles. Unlike surficial aquifers, the Floridan developed millions of years ago when Florida was underwater, and is contained under pressure by a confining bed of impermeable sediments.
- The aquifer supplies fresh water to many Florida cities large and small; along the southwest coast of Florida saltwater intrusion has already contaminated the Floridan Aquifer and it is injected with sewage and industrial waste.
- When water pressure is great enough, groundwater breaks forth as a spring flow; North Florida is home to the highest outflow of freshwater springs in the world.
- Six Florida rivers originate from springs (Ichetucknee, Rainbow, Silver, Wakulla, Weeki Wachee, and Wekiva) and additional rivers are heavily influenced by springs outflow (Oklawaha, Santa Fe, St. Johns, Suwannee).
- The region has been shaped by multiple ocean submersions, and ultimately to Florida's ancient continental connection to what is now Africa, resulting in a unique geology of karst, sand, and clay layers.

History

- The human footprint can be traced back over 10,000 years
- Florida's Eden is contiguous with the ancient Native American Timucuan Nation that had its Provincial Center within the Ichetucknee Basin
- The Spanish, British, French, Seminole, and US forces struggled for control of the land
- Early naturalists explored this exotic, primal place and described it to a fascinated world
- Cattle ranching, begun with the Spanish and continued by Native tribes, was supplemented by varied agricultural enterprises as settlers populated Florida in the 1800s
- Florida's first railway crossed Florida's Eden, from Fernandina Beach to Cedar Key
- Florida tourism began in Florida's Eden as visitors arrived in the port of Jacksonville and ventured up the St. Johns River by steamboat; Jacksonville and the St. Johns still serve as the Gateway to Florida's Eden
- For centuries visitors have come to Florida's Eden for the same three reasons: 1) to explore the unique natural resources; 2) to be awed and inspired to create; and 3) to restore their health. As many of these visitors chose to stay, the area has an unusual concentration of naturalists and culturalists. The region enjoys a rich heritage of visual art, literature, music, and cuisine shaped by Native American, Spanish, African American, Caribbean and European response to the environment.

Florida's Eden Counties

70% of Florida's Eden counties are designated REDI (Rural Economic Development Initiative), the state program for counties of Critical Economic Concern, while only 32% of the remaining 37 counties of Florida are so designated.

Alachua
 Baker**
 Bradford**
 Citrus
 Clay
 Columbia**
 Dixie**
 Duval
 Flagler*
 Franklin*
 Gadsen*
 Gilchrist**
 Gulf*
 Hamilton**
 Jefferson**
 Lafayette**
 Lake
 Leon
 Levy**
 Liberty*
 Madison**
 Marion
 Nassau*
 Putnam**
 St. Johns
 Suwannee**
 Taylor**
 Union**
 Volusia
 Wakulla*

Counties of Critical Economic Concern, designated REDI by the State of Florida.

** listed 2002 - 2007 * listing added 2007 - 2008

According to the 2008 Florida Statute, 288.0656 “ ‘Economic distress’ means conditions affecting the fiscal and economic viability of a rural community, including such factors as low per capita income, low per capita taxable values, high unemployment, high underemployment, low weekly earned wages compared to the state average, low housing values compared to the state average, high percentages of the population receiving public assistance, high poverty levels compared to the state average, and a lack of year-round stable employment opportunities.”

(www.leg.state.fl.us/STATUTES/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0288/Sec0656.HTM)

CHALLENGES: For centuries Florida's Eden was considered a living Eden for its pristine natural resources, year-round growing season, healthful air and water, and exotic beauty. With the development of organized tourism, railroads and hotels transported the hordes of newcomers southward and left the northern half of the state largely alone. This trend was amplified with the post-World War II introduction of air conditioning and mosquito control, resulting in the geometric increase in South Florida population. The citizens of Florida's Eden watched with apprehension as the southern and central sections of the state underwent rapid transformation and the subsequent degradation of natural habitats and quality of life. The residents of Florida's Eden in its small towns and rural counties, naturalists, culturalists, and those who lived off the land and water, kept their paradise a secret. Population and development pressures are now moving into North Florida. Flagler County, for example, is the fastest growing county in the United States. The question is no longer whether development will come to North Florida, but how to manage that growth so that we establish a sustainable ecological and economic future.

Florida's Eden is comprised of thirty counties. The region is rural, sparsely populated and largely unknown. Florida's Eden is also poor. Six years ago when this effort began, the State had just designated 15 of the 30 counties REDI (Rural Economic Development Initiative) as Counties of Critical Economic Concern. The region's poverty is increasing; today 20 of the thirty counties are REDI. While the ecosystems of North Florida do remain largely intact, it has been extractive industries that have served as the mainstay of the area's economy. Fishing, logging, turpentine, and mining have each taken their toll on the area; as each resource was exhausted the residents of the region were left without any great improvement in their situation and no sustainable industry left behind. REDI designation continues this trend, streamlining the process of resource extraction in poor counties. The result has been a reduction in funding sources for community services and education, while the permitting process for resource extraction has been eased. Water is the latest in a long line of extractive economics for North Florida with the difference that water removal hits to the heart of the region's economic and ecologic core.

Florida's Eden is sandwiched between two sprawling and rapidly growing metro areas. The Atlanta area to the north and the 1-4 corridor of Central Florida area to the south. Both areas face the crisis of having outgrown their existing water resources. Having made no plans for this eventuality both population centers now view Florida's Eden as a water resource. Atlanta plans to tap into waters which will reduce the flow of the Apalachicola River by 16%. The St. Johns Water Management District has indicated that up to 155 million gallons a day may be withdrawn from the St. Johns River. The state is moving forward with plans to pipe water from the St. Johns to central Florida metro areas, a project which the St. Johns Riverkeeper estimates could cost some \$4 billion. Metro areas continue to eye the Suwannee and Oklawaha Rivers for additional water.

Florida's Eden finds itself facing local growth and development as well. The same developers who enjoyed short term benefits in south and central Florida now seek to reap their rewards here. Residents fleeing the ravages of south and central Florida are resettling here. The future of Florida's Eden is in question. The region finds itself at the proverbial crossroads. The choices are few: remain silent and hope the wave of growth will recede, join the development and accept the inevitable, or unite and proactively command a different future for Florida's Eden.

The voices for commanding a different fate are growing more numerous and more vocal. However, uniting the region is proving to be difficult as no jurisdictional agency is mandated or empowered to act for the benefit of all thirty counties of North Florida. Arbitrary political boundaries are at odds with the natural boundaries of the ecosystem we are seeking to protect, which until now has resulted in a patchwork of partially effective, competing and contradictory actions.

Community leaders, environmental scientists, and regional planners that the next five years are a critical opportunity for choosing preservation of our natural resources rather than restoration later:

- **Florida's Eden remains the one region of the State able to choose preservation of its natural resources while the remaining areas of the State are struggling to afford expensive restoration plans to try and reclaim their ruined resources.**
- **Florida's Eden can still plan for its growth and sustainable use of its natural resources while the rest of Florida faces crisis control.**
- **Florida's Eden has a choice: what will we look like in 5, 10 or 20 years? The answer is ours to command.**

THE FLORIDA'S EDEN PLAN: The Water Awareness Campaign is one component of the Florida's Eden Plan, a comprehensive framework for establishing North Florida as a cohesive, prosperous and sustainable region. The Florida's Plan is citizen-based, non-partisan, and provides an inclusive vehicle through which all existing corporate, civic, educational and governmental organizations can cooperate even as they remain autonomous and contribute what they do best.

In 2002 Florida's Eden proposed uniting thirty counties of North Florida into one identifiable region, formed a non-profit organization, and held a feasibility conference attended by corporate, government, education and business leaders from across the region. A strategy emerged that recognizes that our natural resources are our region's core economic asset. Consensus was reached that North Florida's thirty counties must begin to act as a region, but that no jurisdictional agency holds the mandate or legal capacity to act regionally. The Florida's Eden Plan provides an open framework within which everyone can benefit while contributing to the success of the entire region.

The Florida's Eden Plan recognizes that regional success can be achieved by working in ten important areas:

- **Education**
- **Workforce Development**
- **Community and Leadership Development**
- **Technological and Economic Innovation**
- **Sustainable Economic Development**
- **Conservation of Land / Water / Energy**
- **Asset-based Tourism / Cultural Destination**
- **High Profile Portrayal in the Media**
- **Regional Cooperation / Uniting of Local Efforts**
- **Development of Civic Awareness and Participation**

WATER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN: FIVE PHASE PLAN

PHASE 1: RESEARCH (completed)

PHASE 2: ENGAGING EACH COUNTY (introduced September 2008)

PHASE 3: REGIONAL GOALS

PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE 5: SUCCESS AND CELEBRATION

Phase 1: RESEARCH (completed)

In 2006 Florida's Eden formally began a water research phase. During this time Florida's Eden met with numerous experts; attended springs working group meetings, water forums and summits; and served on various water initiative committees. The result of our research:

- **Legal protection is inadequate to protect our water resources**
- **There is consensus that enough scientific information is available to recommend action**
- **Citizen willpower and civic muscle are required to ensure the passage of legislative safeguards**
- **Citizens need accurate information on best practices and water conservation, access to affordable solutions, and inspiration to participate**
- **Great potential for regional prosperity exists by preserving our resources and building an economy based on sustainability, conservation, and the new practices that are needed throughout the world**
- **In order to achieve these goals North Florida must unite efforts and act as one region**

Formulating the results of our research, we presented draft versions of strategies that we believed would accomplish the goals of placing safeguards on our water, establish ourselves as a region, and place sustainability at the cornerstone of economic prosperity. Feedback and support from experts, advocates and organizations led to the development of the Water Awareness Campaign of the Florida's Eden Plan.

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PHASE 2: ENGAGING EACH COUNTY (introduced September 2008)

2-A. One Region/One Book Campaign

2-B. Speaker's Bureau

2-C. Products and Services Expos

2-D. Researching County Benchmarks

2-E. Establishing a Regional Information Source

2-F. Welcome to the Neighborhood publications

2-G. Exhibition: "Portray, Preserve, Prosper: The Florida's Eden Springs Heritage District" opening Sept. 19, 2008

2-H. Forum: Water Issues and Solutions, Santa Fe College, October 3, 2008

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2-A. One Region/One Book campaign featuring the award-winning book by Cynthia Barnett, *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern US*

The One Region/One Book campaign provides a process to engage each county through multiple partnerships. As people read, view, listen and become engaged they can become active in local and regional efforts. The components of the campaign include:

1. Book Discussions: public library programs, book clubs, civic organizations, middle and high schools, community colleges, churches and other organizations can all undertake to read the book, create discussion groups, use the readers guide created by author Cynthia Barnett, and integrate the discussion into their existing work, curricula, projects or concerns
2. Speakers: Author Cynthia Barnett will be available to speak to groups. Additional local or regional speakers will also be available through Florida's Eden and partnering organizations
3. Films: North Florida has outstanding films created by world-renowned film-makers that portray and explain our unique water resources and geology. These films are available to be shown by groups throughout the region.

The process accomplishes:

1. Partnerships with many types of organizations
2. Outreach to diverse audiences
3. Brings people together and energized to get involved with existing efforts
4. Each county will enjoy the spotlight as it joins the regional effort; each county will have its own opportunity to share its individual challenges and showcase its existing initiatives
5. Gives Florida's Eden the opportunity to gain a county by county understanding of what is already in place for each of the six action areas of the Water Awareness Campaign
6. Opportunities for sharing resources among counties

Partnerships include:

1. County and Regional Public Library Districts: Library Districts are already accustomed to carrying out city or county book programs and serve as public venues for speakers, films, displays and information. At this time Library Districts in several counties are already planning One Region/One Book promotions and events.

2. County and City Commissioners: Commissioners can work through District Library Boards to encourage county and city participation in the One Region/One Book campaign and link it to county goals and activities.

3. Community Colleges: Santa Fe College, Gainesville, serves as an excellent model, having put the book read into the curriculum plan of specific courses and linking the read with career opportunities. Community Colleges can introduce the read through planning with faculty and augment the program with discussion forums, speakers, films, career expos, student government run programs, and Green Academic and Career Advising (new avenue for workforce development)

4. Civic Organizations: Civic groups provide an ideal link between local citizen action and regional goals. Rotary Clubs, with their specific interest in water issues worldwide, provide an excellent example for Civic Organization involvement. The Columbia County Rotary has taken on the Ichetucknee Promise as a project, committing to visiting a specified number of homes each year to educate residents on how to care for septic tanks and water usage in the Ichetucknee Springs Basin. Each Civic Organization will ideally choose its own project for local involvement.

5. Churches and Religious Institutions: Religious institutions already play an important role in environmental justice and stewardship issues, clean water initiatives, reaching out to youth groups, addressing community economic issues (septic tanks, rebates, etc.) and engaging members in volunteer programs.

6. Schools: the book, *Mirage*, has been approved for use in public middle and high school curricula; study materials are available; and speakers and films can be augment the use of the book. The One Region/One Book program is an ideal way to bring greater involvement of existing school partnerships for mutual benefit, e.g. business partners, local state parks and springs, civic organizations, local utility companies, etc. The ARTT program of Florida's Eden is a pilot program integrating science and humanities with a focus on water in core curriculum subjects; students in the program at Ft. White in Columbia County are working on producing a teaching website that will become available to schools throughout the region as they learn about our water resources.

2-B. Speaker's Bureau makes available the wealth of engaging and informative speakers that are concerned with North Florida's water. The Speaker's Bureau complements the One Region/One Book campaign. North Florida is fortunate to have world class film producers, naturalists, cave explorers, and writers -- the Speaker's Bureau brings this excitement and quality to the public as a way of bringing accurate information and fostering civil action.

Partnerships include:

1. University Scientists, Naturalists, Cave Explorers
2. Water Management Districts
3. Springs Working Groups
4. Journalists
5. Artists, Photographers, Writers, Film Producers

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2-C. Products and Services Expos: Cities or counties are encouraged to create business expos connected with water issues, conservation, and green business practices. Expos will showcase organizations working on water issues, provide information and ways to get involved, and bring together businesses that provide services, products, and programs. Citizens and businesses can immediately become involved in creating our sustainable and economically prosperous region.

Partnerships include:

1. Local Chambers of Commerce
2. Business Associations
3. Civic Organizations
4. Environmental Groups
5. Utility Companies

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2-D. Researching County Benchmarks: An important component of the Water Awareness Campaign is to identify programs already in place in each county which have an impact on water quality. Through this process we can begin the process of understanding what our regional goals should be in regards to specific benchmarks. These include a full range of activities and the related benchmarks for performance: recycling programs, wastewater reuse, runoff treatments, per capita water usage, etc. The information collected will be posted in a public format so that citizens and county managers can begin to share best practices and expertise.

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2-E. Establishing a Regional Information Source: One of the great challenges in acting as a unified region is coordinating the efforts of hundreds of organizations and agencies. This phase of the Campaign includes creating a public web-based information source so that the many non-profit, civic, business and governmental efforts working on water and water-related issues can post briefs on current projects, seminars, and contact information. This list would include all those groups involved in the One Region/One Book campaign, IFAS, Extension Agents, Water Management Districts, State DEP, County Environmental Offices, Corporate Partners, Civic and Non-profit Groups, etc.

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2-F. Welcome to the Neighborhood Publications: Florida's Eden is producing two major publications in 2009, Scenic Trail Guides for the Heart of Florida (covering Alachua, Citrus, and Marion Counties) and the Pure Water Wilderness (covering Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy Counties). 8 page insert publications will be included in each of these publications. Titled "Welcome to the Neighborhood" the inserts will provide a celebratory welcome to Florida's unique water resources along with tips on how residents can care for our water in practical ways. These will serve as trial publications with follow up surveys and evaluations to analyze their effectiveness. Our goal is to produce these Welcome to the Neighborhood publications for distribution throughout our 30 county region in Phase 3 of the Campaign.

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PHASE 3: REGIONAL GOALS

3-A. Public Outreach and Education

- Welcome to the Neighborhood publication distributed throughout the region, utilizing the partnerships developed in Phase 2

3-B. Regional Cooperation and Organizational Networking

- Regional Council established for dealing with water issues

3-C. Environmental Standards

- County Benchmarks established
- Certification Programs initiated by IFAS, DEP, and other partners

3-D. Economic Development

1. Regional Economic opportunities evaluated

3-E. Public School Educational Curricula

- Teaching website on water available to schools throughout the region
- Preliminary evaluation of ARTT program

3-F. Legislative Action

- Regional Council begins process of developing protective legislation
- Caucus held to unite elected officials on water issues

PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTATION

4-A. Public Outreach and Education

- *Welcome to the Neighborhood* publication
- Media, Public Relations, PSAs bring message to public
- Local Outreach and Education programs through civic organizations in each locale

4-B. Regional Cooperation and Organizational Networking

- Regional Conference and Celebration

4-C. Environmental Standards

- Certification Standards Available for consumer products and services

4-D. Economic Development

- Establishment of funding programs, technology transfers, workforce development, business incubators, etc. to promote clean, green, and conservation based businesses

4-E. Public School Educational Curricula

- ARTT evaluation completed; manual produced for introducing ARTT into middle schools

4-F. Legislative Action

- Introduction of Legislation

PHASE 5: SUCCESS AND CELEBRATION

5-A. Public Outreach and Education

- Regional Celebration Events

5-B. Regional Cooperation and Organizational Networking

- Regional Benchmarks for sustainable resource usage are in place in each county

5-C. Environmental Standards

- Certification Standards in place for wide range of products and services

5-D. Economic Development

- Florida's Eden Region serves as an international model for preservation and prosperity as it brings ideas and solutions to bear on global water issues and sustainability

5-E. Public School Educational Curricula

- ARTT replicated throughout region

5-F. Legislative Action

- Passage of Legislation

Phase 1 of the Water Awareness Campaign: funded by Florida's Eden 2007-2008

REPORT

Designating the Region

"The Florida's Eden Heritage Springs Region" is selected to reflect the region's primary defining natural resource, its premier world concentration of springs. Our springs and water are also an enduring part of our heritage and deserving of protection. Florida's Eden publicly introduces the Heritage Springs Region in the Heart of Florida Scenic Trail Guide published in 2008 and introduced at the kick off celebrations held at the April Heart of Florida Coalition (Alachua and Marion Counties) quarterly board meeting as part of the water committee's report, and the free public weeklong Heart of Florida Paint Out, April 2008, where several thousand copies of the guide were distributed. The response is all positive and the public reacts with enthusiasm.

One Region/One Book Reading Campaign

To bring regional attention to water issues, introduce the public to the Florida's Eden Heritage Springs Region, and invite each county to participate in the first phase of the Water Awareness Campaign, Florida's Eden initiates a One Region/One Book reading campaign featuring the award-winning book, *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.* by Florida Trend senior writer, Cynthia Barnett. (*Mirage*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2007). Florida's Eden proposes the idea to Barnett, who agrees to participate by producing study materials, serving on several water forum panels, and being available as a key-note speaker for groups throughout North Florida. At the same time *Mirage* wins the 2007 Gold Book Award as best non-fiction book in the state of Florida, is accepted for college and public high school curriculum, and is placed on the Florida Department of Education's 2008 **Just Read, Florida!** Recommended Summer Reading List for high schoolers.

To establish the One Region/One Book (OROB) campaign, a website is established and the University of Michigan Press agrees to partner to produce OROB promo materials. Complimentary programming, including films, speakers and expos, will be planned with each county to increase awareness, stimulate participation, connect with existing businesses, introduce clean and green tech opportunities for economic development, conduct a resource ID and introduce the regional benchmarks.

Florida's Eden begins local contacts to get OROB started. Marion County Library District brings Marion County as the first to do a full county read. Santa Fe College, Florida's Eden and the City of Gainesville partner to produce a one day water forum and Florida's Eden agrees to curate an educational exhibition to compliment the forum for fall 2008. SFC becomes the first college to commit to an all campus reading of *Mirage*. Florida's Eden approaches Alachua County Library District and enters into a discussion about an all county reading of *Mirage*. Florida's Eden decides to go public with the Region, the water campaign and OROB in September 2008 during the SFC events.

Water Awareness Campaign

As the culmination of the Research Phase, Florida's Eden outlines a strategy for developing regional water awareness and publishes the Water Awareness Campaign Position Paper. Florida's Eden continues to move forward on the Water Awareness Campaign and on projects that will contribute to its success:

- Florida's Eden continues to connect with leaders and partners in public, private and non-profit sectors throughout the region.
- The successful introduction of the Heart of Florida Scenic Trail Guide 2008 is being followed up with production of the 2009 edition of the Heart of Florida Scenic Trail Guide and CD, including a new 8 page Water Awareness insert; the trail will expand to include Citrus County and a portion of Columbia County.
- Fundraising and planning is taking place for development of the Pure Water Wilderness Scenic Trail Guide (Levy, Gilchrist and Dixie, all REDI designated Counties) and is awarded \$25,000 through the state's Culture Builds Florida Grant. The guide will also include an 8 page Water Awareness insert.
- The Florida's Eden educational component, ARTT (Artists Reaching Through Teaching), partners with Fort White High School and the Ichetucknee State Park to build a model education pilot program in 2006. By 2008 the program is enjoying significant success, having doubled in funding, faculty participation and students served. Students will contribute materials to the Water Awareness Campaign, including a teaching website, PSAs, art and design work, etc.
- Florida's Eden/ARTT publishes an education position paper based upon the ARTT/FWHS pilot.
- Funding strategy is developed for Phase 2 of the Water Awareness Campaign